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ABSTRACT

This manual for foster parents and child caregivers (1) provides an outline of normal physical, mental and social/emotional dimensions of child development from age 6 through 15 years of age; (2) indicates what children and youth need from adults in order to develop normally; and (3) identifies problems which may occur in the areas of physical, social and mental growth and suggests ways to handle them. The manual is divided into three sections. Section I considers development age 6 to 8. The need for professional help in dealing with serious problems of learning, emotions and behavior is emphasized. Section II covers the period from age 9 to 12. The emergence of new sexual, racial and ethnic identities and group affiliations at preadolescence is discussed. Section III considers development from age 12 through 15. Normal problems and concerns as well as exceptional problems of adolescent youth are traced. (Three slide/sound presentations and pamphlets were produced in conjunction with this manual.)

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THE GROWING CHILD

From Six Through Fifteen Years

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CHILD HEALTH AND SAFETY SERIES

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THE GROWING CHILD...

From Six Through Eight Years

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Module VIII

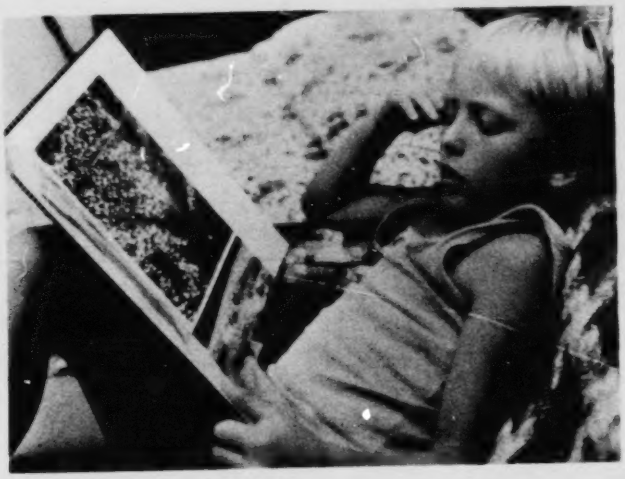
THE GROWING CHILD. . .

From Six Through Eight Years

At the age of six children begin a new stage in their lives. Whatever their background or previous experience at home, in day care centers, preschools, or kindergarten, at six they first go to "real" school. And if all goes well, school will take up much of their time, energies, and thoughts throughout the next 12 years.

To be six or seven or eight years old is exciting. These are the years when children meet a whole new world and learn many new things. They are years of increasing interest in friends, and a continuing need for family support and parental approval. Six- to eight-year-olds are loving, affectionate and delightful, but they can wear down even the sturdiest of adults.

While no two children do everything exactly the same way or at the same pace, there is a general growth pattern with common characteristics for each age group. Some mature, or grow up, a little faster; some learn more quickly in school, while others become more athletic sooner than their classmates. There are certain normal behaviors and development shared by most six- to eight-year-olds, and there are other behaviors and development that signal something is wrong and that outside help might be needed.



I WHAT TO EXPECT

A foster parent or caregiver usually has experience with and understanding of children. However, there are probably times when even the most experienced adult isn't sure if the child is developing physically, intellectually, or emotionally at a healthy pace. One seven-year-old, for example, may behave totally differently from either of two older children. Or this seven-year-old may be doing things that are upsetting or puzzling to the adult. Every parent, whether a natural or foster parent, occasionally has doubts.

The range of normal behavior is wide and holds a variety of actions, thoughts, and appearances. Knowing what to expect will help adults and the child. Should problems come up, caregivers will want to know how to identify and handle them.

For six- to eight-year-olds, physical development is gradual, without the obvious changes of the earlier ages. Therefore, the following section on Physical Development is not divided by ages. Language Development is no longer a major area of change during these years. Most children are able to speak and express themselves well. Their vocabulary and speech continue to improve gradually. Therefore, separate sections on Language Development are not included for children over six.

As children enter first grade, school begins to play a larger part in each child's life. Changes in Mental Development become more obvious as do changes in Socio-Emotional Development.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The early elementary years are a time of slow, fairly steady physical growth without the large weight or height gains of earlier years or the growth spurts that come in adolescence. Some children are bigger or smaller than others, but generally they all grow slowly and steadily through these years.

Children are healthier from six through eight than they were in the preschool years, but they do have two particular problems:

- Contagious diseases. Even with inoculations, or shots, against the traditional childhood diseases, youngsters starting school seem to pick up every ailment that comes along. Stuffy noses and sore throats are particularly common problems in young children.

- Accidents. Many youngsters try to do a little more than they should for their age. This usually means cuts and bruises or maybe a broken bone, but some accidents are more disastrous. The primary cause of fatalities is drowning.

This is an active age Young children never seem to run out of energy until they suddenly give out at bedtime. Their motor coordination, or ability to perform physical skills, keeps increasing with each year. And there are so many things to learn--

- running, jumping, skipping, climbing
- playing ball: throwing, bouncing, catching
- riding a two-wheel bike, roller skating, jumping rope

And they become interested in things involving motor skills--

- games: tag, hide and seek, dodge ball, red rover
- making things - cooking, clay or play dough sculpture, simple sewing or model building

The most noticeable and exciting physical change for children in this age group is losing their first baby teeth and getting their permanent teeth. Some children are gap-toothed during their first three years of school; others seem to have many of their permanent teeth by the third grade; most are at some mid-range.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

During these years children learn to read and develop skills in arithmetic. They are learning to think about things which they could only act out before this. Children this age begin to classify and organize things. They begin to collect things--bottle caps or odd shaped rocks--and then group them by kind or size or color.

By the time children are seven, they've learned how to make all the sounds needed to speak, and they are making longer and more complex sentences.

- The most common speech problems in this age group are with the letters r, s, l, and th.
- Children who are learning English as a second language may not understand everything that is said or may mispronounce some sounds in English. This is not unusual and the child should not be criticized or mimicked.

Children like to play with words. This is a time of name calling, and riddles and jokes, of verses and silly rhymes and words that have special meaning for the child. It is a time of jump rope verses, and secret languages like pig-latin, or swear words and other street language. By six or seven, children can think through sentences without having to say the words aloud.

Children learn a great deal of language by listening and then trying out new words. Children who have never been encouraged to speak may have a poor vocabulary or be afraid to talk. They may have always been told to "shut up" or "don't bother me" or may have rarely heard more than grunts or cursing. A small vocabulary is not uncommon in youngsters from disturbed home situations.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As children enter school, they must learn to get along with many other children and other adults. Children who have been in day care centers or kindergarten usually make the change into public school easily. Children who have not been away from home for a large part of each day go through a period of confusion as they adjust to being with so many different people.

6

Six-Year-Olds

Six-year-olds are a combination of pure delight and holy terror. Wiggling, squirming, bouncing, most six-year-olds are loving and affectionate, yet self-centered and demanding. They want things done now, yet they can dawdle all day getting dressed or eating breakfast. They usually like to tag along with their older brothers and sisters and pay no attention to younger ones.

Friendships at six are erratic and changing. They generally have a "best friend," and when the two of them are together, they often snub a third child who might want to play. They begin to prefer friends of the same sex.

Adult support is extremely important; first graders are hurt and upset when their schoolwork or other actions are criticized or ignored. Six-year-olds are growing up fast, yet they may also baby-talk or act babyish.

Most children of this age like to go to school. They are learning many new things and they like to bring their schoolwork home to show it off, even if they don't say much about what goes on in school.

7

Seven-Year-Olds

Seven-year-olds are beginning to more fully understand the many new experiences that took place in the first grade. They're a bit quiet, at least in contrast to six-year-olds. However, they still have more energy than adults can ever remember having. They think about things more and are a little less impulsive, and even less talkative.

Children at seven are more sensitive, more tuned in to the reactions of others. They also become more helpful around the house, more polite, and more agreeable to suggestions and requests.

Most still like school and want to do well. They also want to know immediately how well they've done.

They now have more friends and play more easily with groups of friends. They have also discovered that playing or being alone is fun too. They enjoy being away from adults and have their own "secret" places to play.

8

ght-Year-Olds

Cu osity about all kinds of things and eagerness to lore new experiences and places are increasing.

Children at this age enjoy carrying on a conversation with adults rather than just talking. They can be quite helpful, taking phone messages or caring for younger family members. Mothers are important; many children will follow mother around the house just to see what she thinks and feels about them.

They are concerned about friends, and one of the things they like best about school is their friends.

They are beginning to be critical of themselves. They may bring only their best school work home now, and are sensitive about things they feel they don't do well.

During these years a child's concept of an independent self develops. Children begin to use standards set by their friends to measure themselves. They react strongly to being accepted by their friends. Boys consider it particularly important to measure up in motor or physical skills.

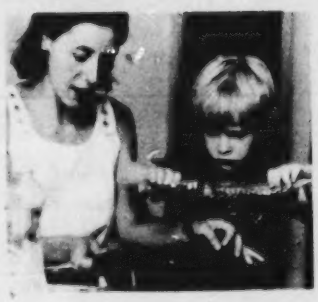
When children reach seven or eight, they want to be like everyone else. They want to dress like their schoolmates, ride the same kind of bike, play the same games, use the same toys, even eat the same cereal or cookies. This is particularly true among girls; with boys, sameness doesn't become too important for another couple of years.

Among children from lower income families, self-concept tends to decrease between the ages of six and ten. As the children mature, they become more aware of what it means, for example, to be a member of a racial or ethnic minority, to have less money to spend or to be less popular or not as smart as some of their classmates. Children generally like to do well and to behave in socially accepted ways, but sometimes they feel they just can't compete.

Children also begin to develop moral standards in the early elementary years. Their values and standards are affected more by the examples of their parents or caregivers than by lectures. Children who haven't had strong positive examples to see and try will need more time and patience as they learn from their new home environment.

II WHAT CHILDREN NEED FROM ADULTS

Children grow in many ways at all times -- physically, mentally, and socially. Just as rates of general growth vary from child to child, the rate of growth within each child will also vary. Some changes are more obvious than others and it is easier for the adult or caregiver to encourage certain types of growth. However, all these areas of growth -- physical, mental, and social/emotional--deserve attention, as they are equally important.



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Health care is essential for physical growth, and for the six- to eight-year-old, it is the adult's responsibility. Parents, foster parents, or guardians should obtain proper immunizations for the child. This will prevent many of the communicable diseases to which children are exposed in school.

Adults must provide care during illnesses and recovery by helping the child get proper rest and diet. Watch for fatigue and listlessness in children who have recently recovered from an illness. This may mean that they had been too active before sufficiently recovering.

Help the child learn responsible health care and its importance by teaching through doing as well as telling. Adults can encourage good habits in these basic areas:

Basic hygiene: The importance of cleanliness, washing hands before eating, covering your mouth when coughing, etc.

Nutrition: Serving well balanced meals. This doesn't mean expensive meals; it means seeing that the child gets a proper balance of protein, fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy products, breads and cereals. It also means encouraging healthy snacks such as fruit and raw vegetables instead of soft drinks and candy. The County Home Demonstration Agent can help with suggestions for good nutritional meals which are also inexpensive.

Children this age are bound to have the usual number of accidents, but the responsible caregiver should certainly take precautions.

- Help prevent accidents by explaining that playing in the street, being careless with matches, or throwing rocks or other things can hurt others as well as the child. Reinforce explanations by stopping a child from dangerous activities.

- Children this age should learn to swim. Almost every community offers Red Cross swimming lessons during the summer. Adults as well as children should take advantage of these classes. Many children drown because they have not been taught to swim. To keep up with their friends, children often may pretend they know how to swim when they do not.

- Just because the child is older is no reason to leave poisons or other dangerous things within reach. Check around the house to make sure that poisons, such as cleaning materials, ammonia, and bug sprays, are locked up or out of reach.

- Loose electric cords, matches, and gasoline should not be left around to tempt children while they play.

- Children must be taught the dangers of matches and fires. They should also be taught what to do in case of a fire or accident. Additional information on safety precautions and ways of preventing accidents is included in Module I of this series.

Dental Care

Dental care is essential for young children. Just because a child has his first or baby teeth is no reason to neglect dental care. It is necessary for the healthy development of the permanent teeth and for future gum care to have dental checkups at least once a year. Encourage the child to form the habit of washing his/her teeth every morning and evening. It is never too soon to start the training that should become automatic as the child grows up.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

While physical growth in six- to eight-year-olds is obvious to the adult, other less-obvious growth is also taking place. Just as rapid and exciting is the stretching and exercising of the child's mind.

One of the simplest and most effective things adults can do is to Think Positively! Expect the child to do well. Social scientists are beginning to accept the effect of expectations on learning and behavior. If an adult feels a child is not very bright, that he is a slow learner or a trouble maker or not able to learn much, the child may just live up to those negative expectations. The same thing can happen in reverse. Expect a child to learn to read and get along well with others, and these expectations may be met.

Support at home, encouragement to succeed, and creating a desire for achievement can do a great deal to help a child become a competent, successful adult. The same holds true in education. If children are to do well in school, don't tell them that reading doesn't matter, or that school is only something to keep them busy until they grow up. Don't say it's not their fault if they don't do well, that the teacher probably is mean or doesn't like them. These responses can give only temporary assurance, and in the long run they can be destructive of any future potential for education.

Help create a desire for learning and achievement through a variety of stimulating experiences. A college education or expensive materials are not necessary. Simply show children that they are cared for. Talk with them. Let them show what they've been learning, and praise their efforts. Instead of criticizing when they do something poorly, praise them when they do well. This will encourage them to keep trying, and they will develop a feeling of pride and self-esteem.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Six- through eight-year-olds are becoming more social. They have a good grasp of language and enjoy talking. They want to talk with other children, of course, but it is also important for them to talk with adults.

Communication is vitally important at every age. Adults should listen to children. A few minutes of undivided attention at least once a day should be set aside to give to children at home. This will help the adult to really understand what the child is trying to say. The child should feel that what he or she is saying is important, that it is worthy of a thoughtful, honest reply.

Adults should be consistent. Saying one thing one day and something else the next confuses children. Certain rules and limits need to be established and followed. For example, getting enough sleep is important for the growing child. Set a time for going to bed, and stay with it. Don't be totally inflexible, though. If there is a special occasion, stretch the time an hour or so.

Children not only need, but often like, limits. Limits tell them that someone cares and that the adult caregiver worries about what happens to them. A child may think that no rules means he or she is being rejected.

Most importantly, adults need to set a good example for children to follow. If children see adults in the home being honest, they are more likely to be honest themselves. But if they see someone being cheated, after they have been told never to cheat, children will base their actions on what is done, rather than on what is said.

III IDENTIFYING AND HANDLING PROBLEMS

As mentioned earlier, no two children will develop at the same rate. But there are certain signs in six- to eight-year-olds that say something is not happening as it should. Adults should be aware of these signals in the areas of physical, social, and mental growth. Although academic problems are usually identified in the schools, other problems may be seen first at home.

Some signals to watch for are:

- Listlessness and little interest in active play often signal illness in a child. They can also signal that a child is feeling a lot of stress and unhappiness. Sitting and working a puzzle or some other quiet activity is fine, but there's a big difference between quiet, constructive activity and a sudden lack of energy or interest in doing anything. The same is true when a normally hungry child has no appetite. Such a drastic change in how the child acts can mean something is wrong.

- New habits may be symptoms of a new problem. For example,

  . Ignoring questions, even when asked if he or she would like an ice cream cone, might indicate a hearing problem.

  . Constant squinting, holding a book close to the face, or sitting extremely close to the television set might indicate a visual problem.

  . Lack of ability to do things requiring physical coordination or intellectual understanding <u>long</u> after children of the same age have mastered them may indicate physical or intellectual problems.

- Increasing loss of interest in school. If children start school eagerly, then in the next year or two begin to show signs of dislike, indifference, or boredom, this may indicate that things aren't going well and that something could be seriously wrong. (Occasionally even the brightest and best adjusted child may want to stay home for a day. This is no cause for concern as long as it doesn't become a habit and the child's basic attitude toward school is a happy and positive one.)

- Lack of improvement in speech or ability to talk with others. By the age of seven, most children can speak clearly and understandably.

- Sense of inferiority. Children at these ages generally like themselves. A child who begins to feel that he or she is not as good as other children may be having school problems in learning or making friends.

- If children show a repeated negative attitude (everyone on occasion has self-doubts or is unhappy with parents or friends), it might be a sign of some other problem. For example, children who are doing poorly in school may decide that they are bad and so is their family.

Many problems of six- to eight-year-olds will correct themselves in a short period of time with minimal special care from the adult. Often the most difficult part is identifying the cause of the problem.

Some problems do not correct themselves and special care and patience are needed from adults. Remember, also, that when a problem is difficult to handle alone, the adult should look for help from professionals. School officials and social workers can provide the names of other professionals when help is needed.

CHRONIC DISABILITIES

If a child has a chronic disease such as diabetes or rheumatic fever, or a long-term disability such as visual, hearing, speech, or orthopedic problems, the child needs help in accepting and coping with his or her problems. They also need encouragement in developing as much independence as possible.

- If a child can't attend school, contact the school to obtain home instruction from a visiting teacher. This is provided free of charge by the public schools.

- All children, especially those with handicapping conditions, need exposure to as much stimuli as possible. Handicapped children are often overprotected or kept at home when this is not necessary. Taking the child to the grocery store, the washeteria, or outside to touch, smell, and see flowers and other such experiences are important for the child.

- Adults need to learn about the child's handicap and ways of helping the child. This may mean getting information from the child's teacher or other professionals who have worked with the child. Joining a local organization for parents and others who are concerned about handicapped children is also helpful.

- Mentally handicapped children who are educable may have troubles in trying to keep up with their peers in a regular class situation. With special help at home and school, the adjustments can be made, slowly and with patience.

SPEECH PROBLEMS

. Stuttering, which is more common among boys than girls, sometimes begins in the first couple of years in school. If a child begins to repeat, take extra time to listen. Let the child complete his or her thoughts without saying the word or trying to hurry the child. Many times, all the child needs is more patience from the family and teacher, and the problem will correct itself in a few weeks or months. Hurrying the child, trying to speak for the child, or calling attention to the child's speech in any way can turn a passing problem into one that may last for years to come.

. If the child has a small vocabulary and poor grammar because of a difficult, unhappy background before coming to the foster home, it may help to tell the teacher. Sometimes a simple explanation, along with a request to help a child catch up with the others, will go a long way toward the child's initial acceptance in the classroom and ultimate success in school.

. When speech problems exist, they are often identified by the school. However, if someone caring for the child notices a persistent difficulty saying words clearly, the school speech therapist, the teacher or principal can help parents or caregivers learn what else to do.

LOSS OF INTEREST IN SCHOOL

Sometimes a child loses interest in school or begins to dislike reading. Or, a secure, outgoing child starts to feel he or she is not as good as others. All these may be signs of school-based problems. The first thing to do is to talk to the child's teacher. Sometimes a teacher who is busy with a roomful of youngsters doesn't see one child's unhappiness, especially if the child is rather quiet. On the other hand, the teacher may label a child who causes disturbances in the class as a troublemaker without looking into the reasons for misconduct. Whatever the reason, talk to the teacher to try to determine a solution.

- Some reading problems may be due to perceptual difficulties, but generally poor reading is a symptom. There might be a number of causes: physical ailments, social environment, lack of early learning stimulation, emotional problems, unhappy preschool experiences. Sometimes all that is needed is a little extra attention and help in the home and the classroom; in other cases, remedial work might be necessary to get the child back on the right track.

- A physical checkup, with particular attention to vision and hearing, is needed for young children with school problems. If a physical cause is found, it can usually be corrected. If there are no physical causes, help can then be concentrated on other areas needing attention.

- Printing and writing are related to motor ability. Many children in this age range--especially boys--have not yet developed all the coordination needed for writing. As coordination improves, so will their handwriting, but they will need much support in the meantime.

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities often begin to show up around the age of seven and eight. If the child's problems in learning to read and write aren't handled quickly and handled well, more problems are likely to follow the child through school. Sometimes children become physically ill every morning, then seem to recover by midday. If sent to school anyway, they may become ill there, either vomiting or complaining of a severe stomach ache or headache. If such symptoms occur often during the week, they may indicate that a child has become afraid to attend school. This is know as school phobia.

. School phobias need to be taken seriously. First be sure that the child isn't really physically ill. Then, if the child seems all right, take him or her to school. A conference with the teacher might help the child overcome his fears. Sometimes, however, professional help is needed, either from a school psychologist or the mental health/mental retardation center.

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Poorly socialized children are rebellious, hostile, often on the attack. These children dislike others and feel disliked. They usually don't do well in school or sports, have a poor view of themselves, and even tell others they're no good. Because they can't get along with other children, they tend to become loners. This isn't unusual for children who have never been able to rely on or trust an adult.

Poorly socialized children need patience, understanding, and kindness so that adults can win their trust. They also need firm control and open disapproval of unacceptable behavior. This is a common problem in children who have been moved from one home to another and who have had a string of adults pass through their lives. They need to know that the adults care, that their actions mean something, and that the adults have positive expectations and hopes for them. Kindness, backed by firmness, can help the child behave in a more acceptable manner, although it may take a long time.

Overanxious children are insecure and unsure of themselves. Oversensitive to criticism, they worry about the smallest thing. These children can literally worry themselves sick with headaches or stomach aches. An over-sensitive child may develop a fear of school because she or he is afraid of being criticized. This usually begins with vomiting or other symptoms of illness on school mornings and if they are sent to school anyway, they display these symptoms so that they can be sent home.

Overanxious children need encouragement and praise. It can be difficult to draw the line between having high expectations for a child and expecting too much. These children should be helped to feel successful and loved even if they don't measure up to an adult standard.

Uninterested Children

Uninterested children rarely cause problems to others, only to themselves. They do poorly and see no reason to do better. They are discouraged and tired. Keep in mind there can be physical as well as emotional causes for apathy.

It is important for the child to have a physical examination, to rule out problems such as inability to hear instructions, fatigue due to a vitamin deficiency, or other physical conditions. In addition to the correction of physical problems, these children can profit by constant encouragement and praise. They should realize that their efforts are worthwhile and that they are important as individuals.

OVERACTIVE CHILDREN

Overactive children are just that. Difficult to manage, always running around and disrupting things in school and at home; they are more than just active youngsters. Emotions are being stirred up inside, making them unmanageable to themselves as well as others.

Sometimes, excessive activity has a physical reason. Therefore, a physical examination is important. If the problem has an organic basis, such as brain damage, medical or psychological help may be needed. Regardless of the cause, scoldings and punishing a child to keep still aren't going to help. Patience, tolerance, and a consistent and steady approach are more effective. It isn't easy to be overly patient with one child when you have a houseful of others to care for. However, in the long run these positive efforts should result in a happier, calmer child.

TEMPER TANTRUMS OR DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

Temper tantrums or destructive behavior. All children occasionally get angry at those around them. A six- to eight-year-old who throws infant-like tantrums, or who smashes things around the house or in other places, is showing something other than plain anger. Repeated misbehavior of this kind may be a symptom of a more severe emotional disturbance.

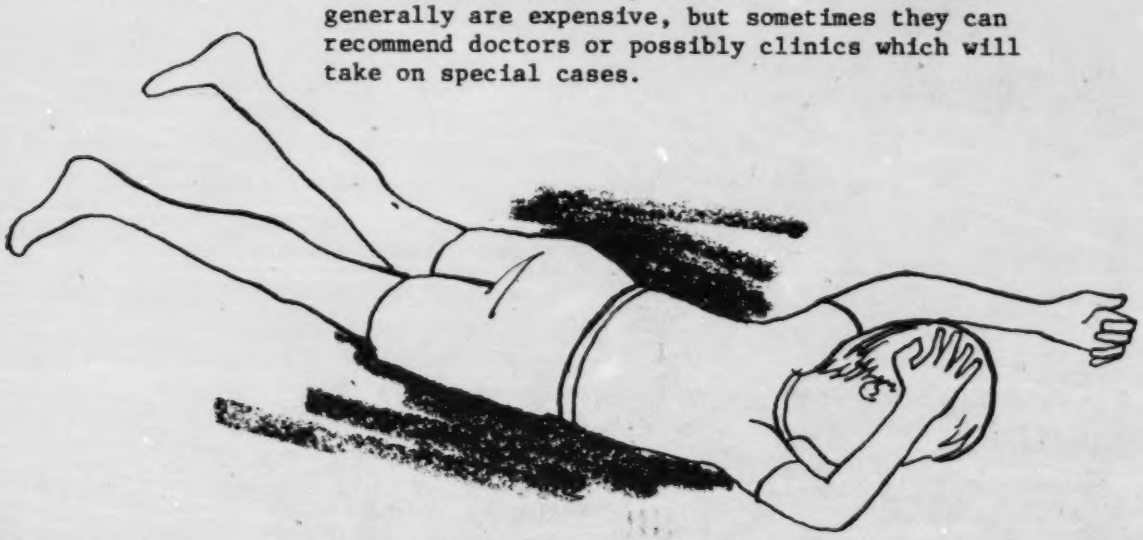
If children continue to throw tantrums or be destructive, and things always go wrong and never seem to be right, they may need professional help. This does not mean that the adult has done anything wrong. The child simply needs extra help. For emotionally disturbed children, professional help can be obtained from:

- Case workers or special workers from the Department of Human Resources.

- Mental Health Centers or Child Guidance clinics. Public clinics, run by the state or county, are listed in the telephone book under Mental Health/ Mental Retardation Center. If none are available locally, write to or phone the state MH/MR office in Austin.

- School Psychologists. Talk to the teacher or principal to find out if a school psychologist is available. Ask them to help find counseling within the school system.

- Psychologists and psychiatrists. These professionals are listed in the yellow pages of the phone book or are referred by family doctors. Their services generally are expensive, but sometimes they can recommend doctors or possibly clinics which will take on special cases.



IV SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF FOSTER CHILDREN

Growing up can be especially hard for children who have been neglected, rejected, or abused. It is also difficult for those who suffer from things beyond adult control--prejudice, poverty, physical and mental handicaps. Some children weather all of these problems and emerge strong and healthy. Others deal with their frustration, anger, and fear by hitting out at the world or withdrawing into a world of their own. They may have many behavior problems that need to be dealt with patiently. Sometimes this calls for professional help.

. Many children will begin to show concern about their natural parents. Questions are asked about why their parents are not around. Children often feel to blame for an unhappy family situation. They may believe they were taken away because of bad things they did. Some look back on their former family situation very idealistically, dreaming about the parents they wish they had. Others fear they may be abandoned again. They can't relax or even try to fit into their new home because they know leaving will hurt too much if they do settle in.

. Reassure children who keep comparing their natural and foster parents. Try to explain that they aren't responsible for causing family problems. Talk--and listen--to the child. Don't criticize the natural parents. Reassurance, kindness, and acceptance can go a long way in putting these very real fears to rest.

CONCLUSION

When children have deep problems, parents and other adult caregivers often cannot handle them alone. It is important to recognize problems so that guidance or treatment can be started to help the child. It is also helpful to remember that no child always behaves as he should. Inappropriate behavior becomes a real problem only when it becomes the major type of behavior the child displays. When that time comes, outside help from community resources is helpful and necessary.

SUMMARY

Six- through eight-year-olds are definitely on their way--physically, mentally and socially/emotionally. At six, school is all new to children; by eight they're old hands at it. Getting off to a good start in school is crucial and involves good physical and mental health. Attitudes, both good and bad, formed that first year are likely to stay with the child and determine later successes or failures in pre-adolescence. It is the foster parents' responsibility to look after the physical well-being of the six- through eight-year-old and encourage a desire for learning through patience, support, and good communication. A positive home environment will go a long way in creating a positive school environment when it is most needed--at the beginning!

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Take this test both before and after studying this module to see what you have learned. An answer key is on the back.

Read each question and circle all the correct answers. THERE IS MORE THAN ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR SEVERAL OF THE MULTIPLE CHOICE ITEMS.

1. In which of the following areas does the child aged six to eight show major changes:

   A. Language development
   B. Physical Development
   C. Mental development
   D. Socio-emotional development

2. True False Generally children are healthier from ages six through eight than they were in the preschool years.

3. True False At six, when first starting school, children are the most critical of themselves. This is lessened by the time they are eight.

4. True False Between the ages of six and 10 lower income children still have favorable self-concepts; it is not until adolescence that they become aware of their differences and self-concept decreases.

5. True False It is socio-emotional growth in children ages six to eight that requires the most attention.

6. True False Young children of this age group should have dental checkups three times a year because this is that all important time when permanent teeth are replacing baby teeth.

7. True False Many of the problems of six to eight year olds will correct themselves in a short period of time with minimal special care from adults.

8. True False If a child has a chronic problem and can't attend school for a period of time, a visiting teacher can be provided by the public schools.

9. If a child begins to stutter:

   A. Complete the words for the child in order to model the correct pronunciation.
   B. Have the child try to speak faster in order to get at the whole thought more quickly.
   C. Wait patiently and let the child finish speaking as best as he or she can.

10. Poor reading can be a symptom of:

A. Perceptual difficulty
B. Social environment
C. Emotional problems
D. Physical problems

11. True False True learning disabilities don't begin to show up until children reach the later elementary years.

12. Match the following:

Type of Child		Characteristic Behaviors
____ A.	Poorly socialized child	A. Insecure, sensitive to criticism
____ B.	Overanxious child	B. Tired, discouraged
____ C.	Disinterested child	C. Difficult to manage, disruptive
____ D.	Overactive child	D. Rebellious, hostile, loner

13. Match the following:

Type of Child		Need from Adults
____ A.	Poorly socialized child	A. Physical exam, encouragement, praise
____ B.	Overanxious child	B. Kindness backed by firmness and clear limits
____ C.	Disinterested child	C. Physical exam, patience, consistent in approach
____ D.	Overactive child	D. Encouragement, praise feeling of success

14. True False If a child is emotionally disturbed to the point of needing professional help, it means that the adult careperson has probably missed some important need of the child.

15. Sources of professional help for the emotionally disturbed child can be obtained through

A. Department of Human Resources
B. Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center
C. School psychologist
D. Private psychiatrists/ psychologists

ANSWER KEY

1. C, D 6. False 11. False
2. True 7. True 12. A-D; B-A; C-B; D-C
3. False 8. True 13. A-B; B-D; C-A; D-C
4. False 9. C 14. False
5. False 10. All 15. All

Module VIII
THE GROWING CHILD
From Nine Through Eleven Years

Module VIII

THE GROWING CHILD

From Nine Through Eleven Years

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Module VIII

THE GROWING CHILD
From Nine Through Eleven Years

The upper elementary years are the beginning of a transition period. No longer little children, nine- to twelve-year-olds are becoming aware of themselves and others as individuals. Adults still have a primary influence, and children need their guidance. Children in this age group often are unable to clearly express their problems. Adults should be sensitive to children's needs and seek help for them when necessary.

In this module, information on what to expect in the areas of physical, mental, and social/emotional development is followed by ways in which adults can help the child. Nine- through eleven-year-olds often face some of the same problems as children from six to eight, such as loss of interest in school and inappropriate or unacceptable behavior. Other problems that may arise during these years relate to school and friends. These and other topics are discussed in the final section of this module, Identifying and Handling Problems.

I WHAT TO EXPECT

The upper elementary years--fourth through sixth grade--are a time when some children are content being the "big kids" in elementary school. Others are already reaching toward adolescence and being more grown up. There is little difference between how eight- and nine-year-olds look and act. Ten-year-olds generally are a bit more mature and secure in their world. By 11, however, childhood is beginning to come to an end. Most children, though, for a little while longer, can put off the pleasures and pains of growing up. What are some of the things we should expect, and do, for nine- through eleven-year-olds?

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Before the age of ten, boys and girls grow at about the same rate, around two inches each year. In the upper elementary grades there is often a big difference in the size and development of children, and by 11 a number of differences begin to show up. To begin with, girls mature, or physically develop, earlier than boys and are often taller and heavier than boys of the same age. Boys will get their growth spurt in another few years. The average sixth-grade class has children of many sizes and all stages of development.

In girls, the first signs of pubescence, such as the beginning of breast development and body hair, may begin as early as nine, but for the average girl they begin a year or two later, with menstruation starting around the age of 12. Early development often causes self-consciousness, since few children like to appear different from their classmates. This stage of growth calls for better hygiene, nutrition, and dental care. Early development may occur in boys at this age, but it is not as common.

This is a healthy period, with little illness. Minor accidents such as cuts and bruises and occasionally a broken bone are the major causes of physical ailments. As with younger children, motor vehicles and drowning are the two major causes of serious injury and deaths.

Physical activities such as ball games, running, climbing, bike riding, and swimming become more important, especially for boys. Girls take part in them too, but generally not as much once they reach puberty.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

By the age of nine or ten, children have a longer attention span and are interested in many new skills and activities. Some like to read and bring books home from the library or bookmobile; others begin collecting, or learning about new things such as stamps, rockets, seashells, or wildlife. Some children like to learn new skills such as sewing or woodworking. They gain self-confidence from praise of their new projects or efforts.

Children of these ages discover that they can use some of the skills they've learned in school outside the classroom. They can use arithmetic to pay for something at the store or measure themselves to see who is taller. They can read for fun as well as for learning. It may be just looking over the TV schedule or the scores from yesterday's ball games, but it can also be a good book.

In language development, all speech problems should be gone by the late elementary grades. Youngsters continue to increase their vocabularies, say words clearly and correctly, and become more adept at abstract thought. They can think of ideas, not just about things that they can see around them.

Reading levels vary from not reading at all to reading at an adult level. Those with reading problems at this age are likely to lose interest in learning and feel they are failing. Although academic learning is the responsibility of the schools, adults can help by keeping aware of what the child is learning and noticing possible problems, some of which are discussed in the following sections.

SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Nine-Year-Olds

By nine, children are beginning to mature. They are more self-confident and patient and accept their own mistakes more easily. Girls think more about their clothes, while boys are not interested in clothes or cleanliness. Children this age are a little more organized and are beginning to plan and budget their time.

Friends are important; no one is more miserable than the youngster who doesn't have someone to play with. Organized play, games, and clubs are also a big part of their lives.

Doing well in school is important, too, and youngsters generally are aware of "how smart" everyone is. Nine-year-olds have a longer attention span, especially when they choose their own activities. For example, if a child decides to build a model airplane, he may work on it for hours, but if an adult tells him to do it, he may lose interest in a few minutes. Children are more independent at this age. They like competitive games, and want to learn how to be good in sports.

Ten-Year-Olds

Ten-year-olds have one of the easiest years of childhood. Usually they are quite self-confident, mature, and interested in what they do. They may seem sad or depressed or angry at times, but such moods don't last very long. They have few fears and anxieties and generally like all the things going on around them.

Children at this age like to join clubs and to form groups of their own. They like to wear shirts, caps, buttons, or whatever to show that they are a member of a special club.

This is a time for having a "best friend" and playing in small groups as well as for enjoying family outings. Children this age are beginning to want to dress, act, and sound like their friends. They often are also influenced by the manner of dress, speaking or acting of a favorite TV or movie personality.

Eleven-Year-Olds

Sixth graders are at a turning point. The girls are often entering adolescence, and the boys are still little boys. Belonging to groups is very important. Groups provide the basis for many activities, such as swimming or the movies, or just having someone to be with.

Children in preadolescence may become rude and difficult to handle at home and at school. Teachers and parents are considered the enemy. One day eleven-year-olds may openly rebel about such things as going to bed or taking a shower or doing work around the house. Yet, the next day they can be surprisingly well mannered, especially away from home. Being eleven is the beginning of becoming independent, of ignoring what adults say and doing daring things. Although they may not get along with their parents, they get along fine with their friends.

Girls often begin to show an interest in boys at this age, but most boys return this interest by joking, teasing, and showing off. Going to school becomes a problem for many youngsters, especially if they aren't doing well or their friends aren't doing well.

As children gain physical strength and coordination, They become increasingly interested in both team and individual sports and competition. Climbing trees or seeing who can run the fastest is fun, but eleven-year-olds also like quiet games such as checkers, chess, and monopoly that require thinking skills.

9-11

During the years from nine through eleven, children become more aware of racial and ethnic differences. Childhood experiences are heavily influenced by the social and cultural settings in which children are born. Their racial or ethnic heritage plays a part in the way other children act toward them. This may lead to prejudices and hostilities from some, acceptance from others. The way children handle these attitudes is determined a great deal by attitudes they see and learn at home. If adults have tense, hostile reactions, children often reflect or imitate these. This can give the youngsters a negative approach to life and discourage any efforts to do well. On the other hand, adults with strong positive values and feelings of hope can influence their children to learn how to handle difficult situations smoothly. These children have a better chance to work toward and develop a successful adult life.

II WHAT CHILDREN NEED FROM ADULTS

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

For proper growth and development, children must be guided gently by the adults who care for them. These years have been called the latency period, the time when physical development is not as obvious as it was in infancy or will be in adolescence.

It is a good time to teach children about what to expect in adolescence--to tell them about the physical growth that will take place and the changes that will happen to their bodies. Girls are especially worried about their bodies during these ages. Merely explaining the facts isn't enough. It is important for children to know that these changes and developments are natural, that they occur to everyone during their late childhood or early adolescent years, and that they are the first signs of growing up.

Some children may begin maturing physically before the majority of their peers. They are in special need of understanding and support. Early maturing girls are often embarrassed by their size and development. They may feel out of place with their own age group and may start spending more time with older boys and girls. This can put them into social situations that they haven't learned to handle. Assure them that there is nothing wrong and that they are just growing up a little faster than their friends.

HYGIENE

Teaching basic hygiene is especially important now, so that good habits will be formed before puberty, which brings body odors and a greater need for cleanliness. For foster children who may not have had good examples to follow, be especially patient and tactful in helping them learn how to keep clean and healthy bodies.

All children should have a yearly checkup by a physician to make sure they are growing up healthy. If you suspect any physical problems such as vision or hearing loss or if a child is continually tired, take the youngster for a physical checkup.

Immunization records should be checked to be sure that the protection is current and complete. The county medical association and the Department of Human Resources can give you names of doctors or clinics where you can get medical care.

Dental checkups also are important. A dentist can check the permanent teeth that are coming in to make sure they are healthy and fill any cavities that appear. Children are often lazy about brushing and flossing their teeth. You will probably have to remind them to brush every morning and evening.

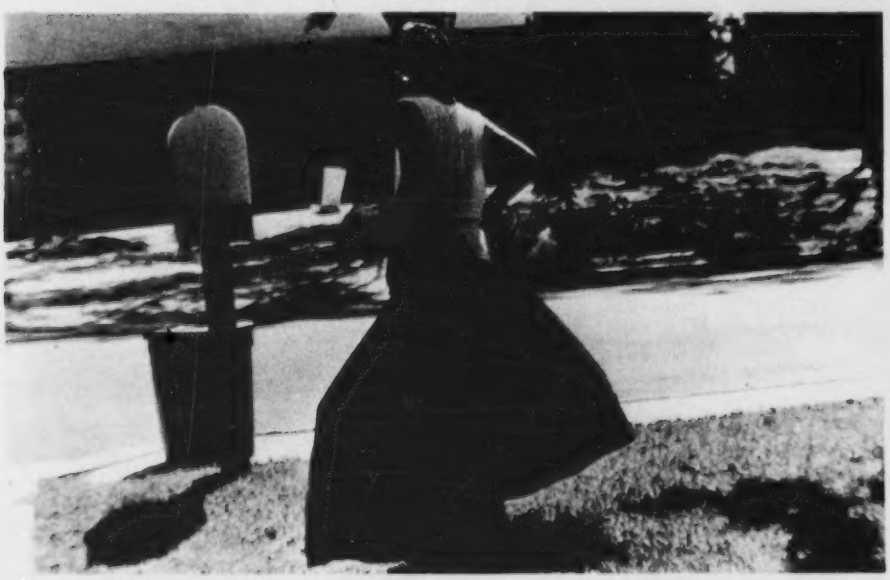
Safety is essential at every age. Accidents are a major cause of death. Safety rules for activities such as riding bicycles and swimming must be reinforced. If they are broken or forgotten, firm discipline, such as withholding privileges related to the broken rule, is the best reminder.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Children learn and develop their intellectual potential from many sources, not from school alone. While some children may not be doing well academically because of reading or other difficulties, all can learn from first-hand experiences. As an adult, you need to expose the child to any available opportunities for first hand learning, for children of these ages are eager to see and experience the world around them.

Examples of these opportunities are:

- Taking trips to stores, places of historic interest, nature settings (forests, lakes, sea shores), community services, parks and recreation areas.
- Participating in household activities with guidance and support in doing the tasks and praise for work well done.
- Collecting objects, plants, insects, rocks, etc., which, with encouragement, may spark a lifetime interest.
- Participating in such community or school activities as baseball, swimming, music, and drama.
- Pursuing a current interest, with encouragement and help in learning more about it.
- Viewing TV programs that are interesting, informative, and entertaining.



Listening to and talking with children about things of interest to them can foster a great deal of learning. An adult does not have to be a child care professional or an authority on the subject discussed. The most important ingredient is a willingness to listen and a respect for children's ideas. By encouraging children's curiosity, all adults can help them have positive experiences in learning. Often these carry over to school work and other learning situations.

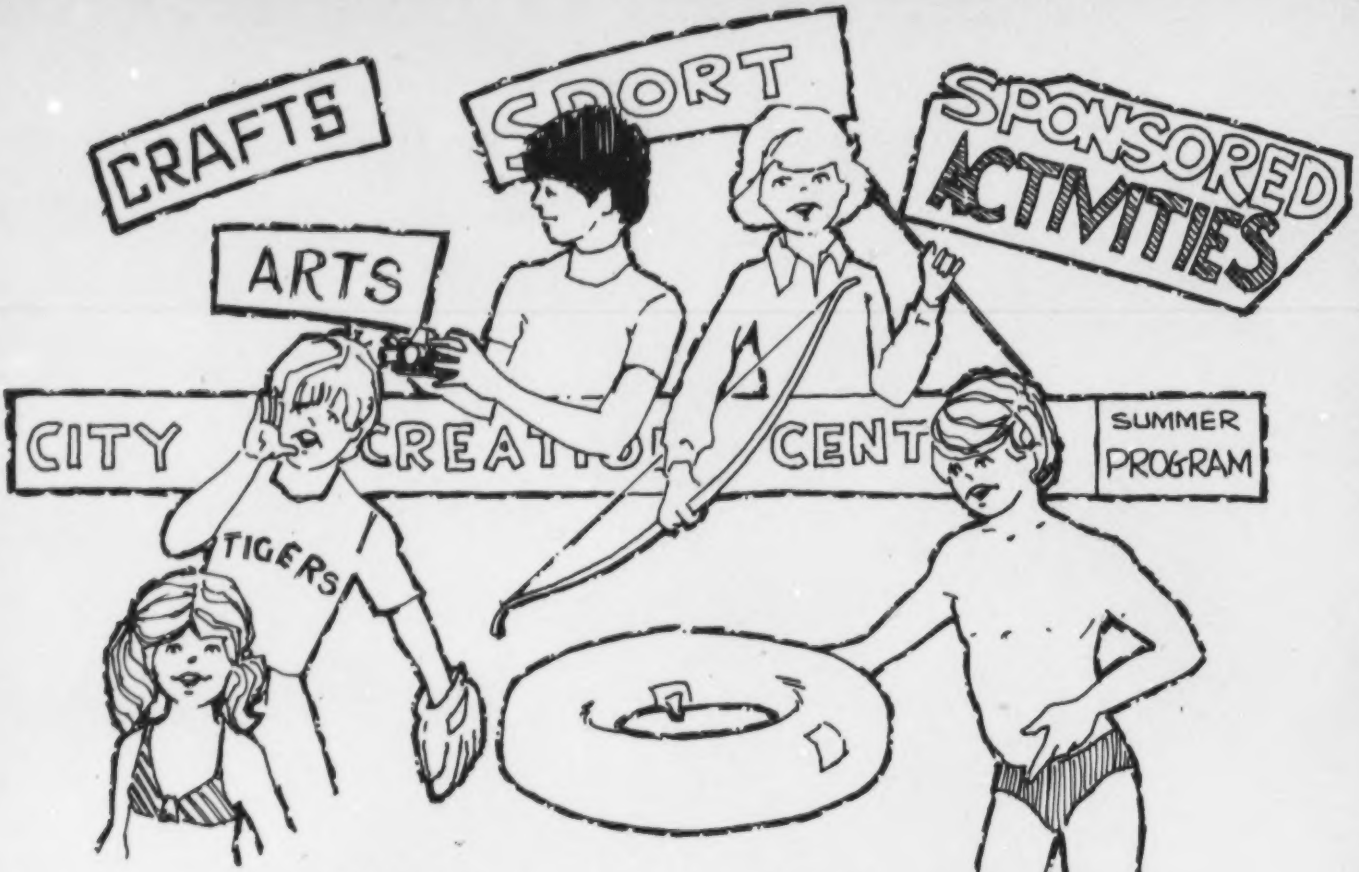
It is important for an adult to take an interest in a child's school and the child's performance there. Work with the school to help eliminate reading and other academic problems. Encourage children and support them. Praise good work and improvement. Try not to nag or scold children who aren't doing well. They already know this. Instead, let them know that you think they can learn. This can give them the encouragement and self-confidence they need to try again. Another way adults can help children develop their intellectual potential is by being certain that any physical problems are identified and treated.

SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL GROWTH

There are many things adults can do to help the nine- through eleven-year-old through this transition period from childhood to the teen years. To develop their confidence, give them acceptance and positive encouragement in learning new skills. Patience, understanding and guidance are particularly important at these ages. It is also important to recognize each child as an individual.

. Show affection and interest in children. There are many ways to do this. Let them help with simple household chores--cooking, hanging clothes on the line, spading the garden, washing the car. Working together gives children a feeling of closeness and acceptance that cannot be measured. Do things together on the spur of the moment. Just taking a picnic supper into the backyard can be a pleasant change in routine.

. Recognize the individual needs of children. Each child is different, and each needs understanding, affection, and acceptance, with encouragement of individual talents and abilities. During these years, children begin to compare themselves with one another, especially in school activities. Adults should stress the individual abilities of each child and discourage comparisons.



- Help children stay busy and active. Their energies need to be directed in positive ways which build their self confidence.

- Help children who are bored find new and different activities. Check at the school or with a social worker to find where there are community centers or a recreation department that offer activities for children. The telephone book has listings for these centers, too. Churches sometimes offer Saturday outings to nearby parks or recreation centers.

- Provide children with a choice of activities to give them a greater chance for success in at least one. If, for example, a child reads poorly, perhaps you could see that he or she has a chance to learn to play tennis or play a musical instrument. Find other activities in which he or she can succeed. Be sure to praise the child for doing a good job. Motor skills and games often provide a chance of success for children who don't do well in school. On the other hand, a non-athletic child in a family of athletes might be scorekeeper or help the star player with arithmetic.

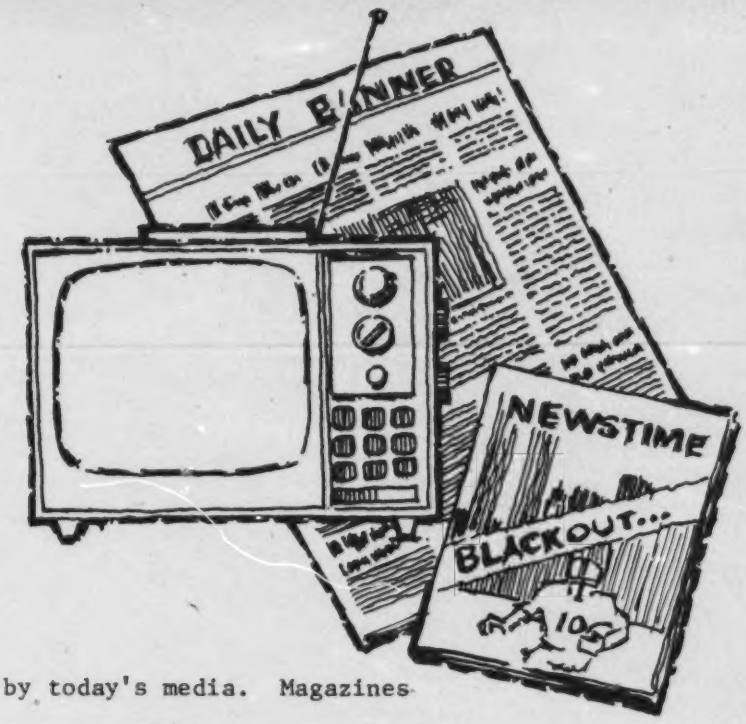
COMMUNICATION

Children need to be able to talk with adults and express their feelings, During these years they will follow the examples set by adults more than those set by peers. Adults are still a major influence.

. Keep communication open. Take the time to listen to children, and really try to hear what they are saying. A child who is repeatedly put off may eventually just stop trying.

. Encourage independence, yet don't forget that nine- through eleven-year-olds are still children. Let them be dependent and call on adults for help and advice and love when they want to. They will become independent soon enough.

. Give children positive examples to follow. Don't pass personal prejudices and biases on to children. By showing, not just telling them the type of person they should be, they will eventually follow the positive pattern offered them by the adult.



Children are influenced by today's media. Magazines and illustrations focus heavily on sex and violence. Television shows are far more negative than positive in the values shown. Children tend to believe that everything they see is factual.

. Use the mass media positively with children. Television, especially, can confuse children. Watch TV programs with them to see what they are interested in. More important, talk to them about what they see in programs. Exchange ideas; listen to their feelings about some of the values and standards shown. One way to give children positive and healthy values is to talk about these values with them.

. Use television to start a discussion that might be difficult to bring up. Both commercial and public broadcasting have many programs that make serious efforts to deal with social problems and issues such as death, alcoholism, and drug abuse.

LIMITS

As youngsters develop greater independence, conflicts with parents, though normal, are often very trying to the adult.

. Let children blow off steam and express their thoughts. It helps to have a sense of humor and to show understanding. Sometimes children are only testing to see how an adult will react to something they say. If the adult reacts with patience, they're more likely to drop the whole idea.

. Help children to understand the reasons behind rules and limitations.

There is no need to comment on everything children say. It often helps simply to repeat the things they say. This helps children get their thoughts out in the open without an adult judging their every word.

. Avoid becoming defensive when a child is disrespectful. Try to be patient in explaining disapproval of the words or actions they have used. The child may be on the defensive, too. Don't fly off the handle. That will only make them ready to try it again.

. Let children know what the limits are and what is expected of them. Consistency is important for youngsters to know where they stand. Lack of discipline, lack of affection, and lack of direction in a previous home situation can be more than a young child can handle. Adult caregivers may be able to replace some of these things that were missed --love, consistent behavior, firm guidance and understanding. Doing all these and keeping communications open may not provide all the answers, but they can go a long way to help in a difficult situation.

. Limit punishment to times when a child deliberately does something wrong. Let the child still feel loved. Physical punishment too often leads to hostility and loss of self-respect, instead of teaching the child not to repeat the action. In general, punishment should be given only when it counts. Approval and encouragement are more effective methods of teaching.

. Be firm and matter-of-fact when correction is necessary--and it is bound to be needed fairly often for children of these ages. Yelling and threatening only give children a poor example to follow and do little to correct the child's behavior. Be firm yet friendly in helping them understand what is expected and the consequences of misbehavior. Children are more likely to accept punishment if they think it is justified.

III IDENTIFYING AND HANDLING PROBLEMS

These are crucial years in school. During the upper elementary grades, gaps between the children who have learned the basic materials and those who haven't become obvious. Many children begin to lose interest in school because they have trouble reading. Poor reading may be due to difficulties such as not hearing or seeing well or seeing things differently than other people. It can also be a symptom of unconscious resistance, based on having failed many times before. This creates an emotional block that can keep children from learning to read. Sometimes children read poorly because they have little support or encouragement at home. This causes some children to feel they just aren't smart enough to learn.

As a parent or adult caregiver, you may notice problems at home related to school work. Make an appointment with the child's teacher to discuss any concerns you have. Sometimes teachers have so many students that they are unaware of the seriousness of one student's problem. In school where students have different teachers for each subject, the teachers may not realize a child is having problems in several classes.

Talk with the teacher to find what is wrong and what you can do to help when a child:

. never seems to understand what he or she is supposed to do

. has difficulty with school assignments

. is unable to read the materials

. is unable to understand the ideas or information taught

These all might be signs of larger problems. At first, some children are just a little bit behind their classmates, but gradually they fall farther and farther behind. These symptoms could point to a physical problem such as poor hearing or vision. Or the trouble might be emotional--some children are discouraged by never doing well and give up trying. Some children might even try to hide their intelligence because friends make fun of them.

TRUANCY

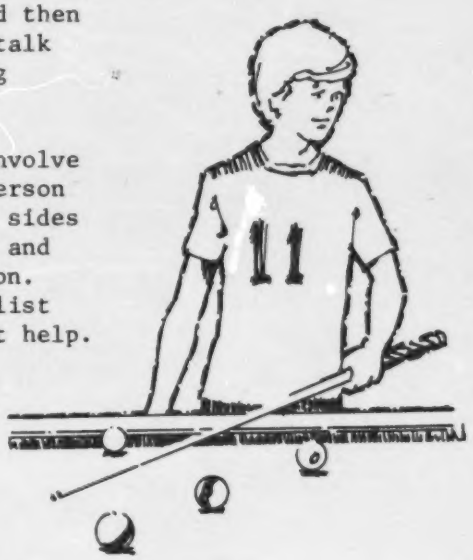
Truancy may be a symptom of school problems. It is one way that children rebel against the school for not meeting their needs or against parents or adult caregivers.

Try to get the child to talk about the problem. This will help you both deal with it. Talking will help the child to identify the reason for skipping school. It might be that other students are making fun of the way the child talks or walks or that the child feels "picked on" by the teacher. Perhaps the child feels that too much is expected of him/her or that the limits set are too strict.

If the problem seems to be at school, talk with the teacher and explain the problem. Most teachers will be happy to do what is necessary to help the child become more comfortable. Keep in mind that many students--especially boys--are embarrassed to have a female adult go to school to talk about their problems. Do tell the child what you will talk about, how you will say it, and assure him or her that the other students will not know about it.

Often children skip school because of peer pressure. In this case you should find out the names of the other students. Talk to the counselor about the problem. The counselor will take over from there. Be sure you call the counselor every now and then to see how the situation is moving. Also, talk to the child to see how he or she is feeling about the matter.

If the problem is at home, it may help to involve a third person whom you both trust. This person would be able to listen objectively to both sides of the situation and to help both the child and the parent or adult caregiver find a solution. The case worker or child development specialist from the Department of Human Resources might help.



VISUAL PROBLEMS

Parents or adult caregivers often are the first to notice signs of visual problems. These may go unnoticed in younger children, and sometimes they do not develop until middle childhood.

Signs of visual problems include:

. squinting or frowning when using the eyes

. holding books unusually close to the eyes

. sitting extremely close to the television

. having trouble reading street signs or billboards

. complaints of eye aches or headaches, especially after using the eyes

Children who have trouble seeing should have an eye examination. Vision problems sometimes seem to appear rather suddenly. The sooner they are diagnosed, the sooner they can be corrected with glasses. The County Health Department can tell you where to get medical help.

HEARING PROBLEMS

Hearing problems, especially mild ones, are very difficult to detect. Children who have had trouble hearing from a very early age may have grown accustomed to the silent world around them. They may have also become very good at watching the speaker's mouth or looking for other cues such as hand gestures to determine what is being said.

SIGNS OF HEARING PROBLEMS INCLUDE:

. not answering questions

. repeated failure to understand and follow directions

. a need to watch the speaker's mouth in order to understand

. complaints of earaches or pains

. any running or drainage from the ears

. complaints of not being able to hear

. talking in a loud voice

Children who have trouble hearing should have a physical checkup and a hearing test. Hearing problems may develop following an illness, such as measles or scarlet fever or after a severe cold. Sometimes a hearing loss is gradual, and the child may not realize he or she can't hear well. The County Health Department can tell you where to get medical help.

SPEECH PROBLEMS

If children still don't speak clearly by the fourth grade, talk to the teacher or speech therapist. Most speech problems are outgrown by this time, and those that aren't should be checked so that therapy can be started as soon as possible. Repeating words or stuttering is not uncommon in nine- and ten-year-old boys. Frequently this disappears with time and patience.

The following may indicate that the child has a speech problem:

. speech that others cannot understand

. mispronouncing or omitting certain sounds

. mispronouncing or omitting certain words

. speaking very slowly

. speaking in a nasal or whiney voice

. speaking in a hoarse voice

Children with speech problems should be tested by a speech therapist. Let the school know that you are concerned about the child's speech. The school will provide the help your child needs.

For children who stutter, try not to hurry them or speak for them. Let them talk no matter how long it takes or how nervous you get listening to them. With luck, the problem will disappear as quickly as it came. If the child continues to stutter for several months, request a meeting with the school speech therapist.

BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

The main difference between normal and abnormal behavior is persistence. Behavior that shows a need for professional help includes:

. Behavior that resists ordinary education efforts to change it

. Behavior that interferes with a child's relationship with his or her family or friends. Examples are:

- children who often participate in disruptive or destructive actions
- children who have few friends and who think others dislike them
- children who bully and attack others
- children who withdraw from others and spend their time daydreaming
- children who do not notice others or take part in any activities
- children who are mentally and physically handicapped and who haven't learned how to handle and live with their disabilities
- children who are always tired and have little energy
- children who are grossly overweight yet are always hungry
- children who are hostile and fearful and openly afraid of failing and disapproval from parents and teachers.

These attitudes create a vicious circle, leading to poor school performance and lack of skill development, followed by greater fear and expectation of failure.

When these problems are extreme, professional help is usually needed. Talk to the case worker or child development specialist to see what help is available through the Department of Human Resources. Other sources of help may be the school psychologist or the local Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center.

LACK OF FRIENDS

Children need friends of their own age. Without friends they are left out of activities and become lonely, adding even more problems to existing ones. Often children who have moved from one home to another have difficulty making friends. This is an area in which adults can be helpful.

- Tell the child that you would be happy to have him or her bring friends home after school to play. Children who have previously been in unhappy home situations may be afraid to bring other children home for fear they will be teased or mistreated. This fear may keep them from trying to make friends at all.

- Talk to the teacher to see if he or she could make a point of including the child in group activities. The teacher may be able to pair the child off with another to go on an errand or work on a special project.

- Help the child develop a socially valued skill, such as playing a musical instrument or becoming very good at a sport. City recreation departments often have craft lessons or music programs or organized sports activities that could help a lonely child find friends and self-confidence.

PREJUDICE

Children cannot be completely protected from prejudice, but they can be helped to deal with it. Sometimes unnecessary prejudice and mistreatment of children occurs within the classroom in relation to race, ethnicity, or handicapping conditions.

Work with the child who is experiencing any form of prejudice. Ask the child's teacher to help. Be particularly accepting and understanding. Sometimes the teacher will let you know about the problem so you can work together on resolving it.

Problems that don't go away and that seem to get worse rather than better need the experience of your social worker, the school psychologist, the Mental Health/ Mental Retardation Center, or the county Medical Society.

DELINQUENT ACTIVITIES

A lack of friends, feeling unimportant, and a sense of failing can push a child into shoplifting and vandalism. Breaking windows and lights and marking up walls in schools or other public buildings is destructive to the child as well as to public and private property.

Most children are quick to give excuses. However, it is important that they learn to become responsible for their own actions. When things have been stolen or damaged, it is important to have children replace or pay for the property they have destroyed. They usually don't have the money, but they can work off the amount by doing cleaning chores or other appropriate work. Adults who help children become responsible for their actions can have a lasting and positive effect in helping them become responsible adults.

Sometimes you can provide children with a positive alternative to their destructive actions. It might help to get them busy with productive, positive activities in which they can feel important. After-school activities sponsored by the school or recreation department are usually available. Talk to the adult sponsor, explain the child's needs, and get the sponsor to help the child feel a part of the group.

SUMMARY

The years from nine to eleven are most important ones, especially in regard to how children feel about themselves, their progress in school, and friends. The junior high school years that follow will require skills in academics, especially reading, and the ability to make new friends in a larger school. The child who leaves the elementary grades with feelings of self-confidence and competence will have an easier time. Adults can help by being sensitive to the child's changing needs and concerns and by providing guidance and support while encouraging independence.

Children must know they can count on a caring adult. It is important to be able to talk together, to understand and be understood. Children need to be able to express their thoughts and feelings and to tell about what they've done. You are not always going to agree with what they say. The child should know this, however. Agreement is not as important as caring and understanding. In these years it is important to serve as a steady and understanding counselor and guide to the nine- through eleven-year-old.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Take this test both before and after studying this module to see what you have learned. An answer key is at the bottom of this page.

Read each question and circle all the correct answers. THERE IS MORE THAN ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR SEVERAL OF THE MULTIPLE CHOICE ITEMS.

1. True False By the time children reach the ages of 9 to 11, they are able to express their problems clearly.

2. The average age at which girls start menstruation is:

   A. 9 years
   B. 10 years
   C. 11 years
   D. 12 years

3. The two major causes of serious injury and death for this age group are:

   A. Drowning
   B. Poisoning
   C. Motor vehicles
   D. Burns

4. True False In language development, all speech problems should be gone by the late elementary years.

5. True False Ten-year-olds have one of the easiest years of childhood.

6. True False During the years 9 to 11, children are still pretty much unaware of racial and ethnic differences.

7. True False During these years, children follow the examples set by peers more than those set by adults.

8. Poor reading ability may be due to:

   A. Vision problems
   B. Hearing problems
   C. Emotional blocks
   D. Little support or encouragement from home

9. Match the following:

   ____ A. Vision Problem
   ____ B. Hearing Problem
   ____ C. Speech Problem
   ____ D. Behavior Problem

   1. Repeated failure to understand and follow directions
   2. Sitting extremely close to the TV
   3. Mispronouncing/omitting certain words or sounds
   4. Withdrawing from others, apparently daydreaming

ANSWER KEY

1. False
2. D
3. A,C
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. All
9. A-2, B-1, C-3, D-4

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From Twelv
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Module VIII

THE GROWING CHILD

From Twelve Through Fifteen Years

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Module VIII

THE GROWING CHILD

From Twelve Through Fifteen Years

Many changes occur in the few short years between 12 and 15. Although 12-year-olds are not quite teenagers, and the teen years extend beyond age 15, the term teenagers is used to refer to the 12- to 15-year-old age group in this module. During these years, teenagers move from childhood to adulthood in physical appearance. Educationally, some may move from the familiar, safe, elementary school with children from the same neighborhood to the junior high, with students from many different areas. They develop slower socially than physically, although they may feel they are quite grown-up. They are becoming increasingly interested in the opposite sex, yet they are not quite ready to cope with the adult world. Teenagers may look and act different, buth they are still the same children, going through what can be one of the most difficult phases of growing up.

Although physical development is most obvious, changes in emotions create the most problems. Both physical and mental changes affect emotional development, and it is this area which is usually of major concern to adults. Consequently, in this module, greater emphasis is placed on the social-emotional aspects of development.

Understanding normal patterns of development and helping teenagers understand themselves eases some of the difficulties of these years. All youngsters in this age period do not have severe problems, but most have some difficulties. Even the most minor difficulty can become a problem to a teenager.

I WHAT TO EXPECT

Remember that all teenagers will not develop at the same rate or have the same problems. Some will grow and change at an average rate and generally be pleasant and easy to get along with. Others will change rapidly and suddenly, and some will take everything that happens twice as hard as their friends.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The years between 12 and 15 are a time of greatest physical growth. Girls grow an average of three to four inches between ages 12 and 14. Boys grow an average of six to eight inches between ages 13 and 16.

This is the time of puberty, or sexual maturity, for most teenagers. However, the range of years in which they develop is a wide one: ages 10 to 16 for girls and 12 to 18 for boys. The average age of first menstruation is around 12 years.

Puberty brings a number of changes:

. Acne, or pimples, are a major problem for many teenagers.

. Awkwardness, based on sudden growth and not knowing quite what to do with those long legs and arms, is a nuisance more than a problem.

. Speed, endurance, strength, and coordination increase, especially for boys.

. Facial features enlarge and broaden, especially the nose and chin.

. Hormone development may cause body odors.

. Permanent teeth, except for a few back molars, all come in.

. Vision changes are common, along with a need for corrective glasses.

. Facial hair begins to appear in boys, and some boys may need to begin shaving, although this usually happens in the later teen years.

. Calorie needs are high. Young people, especially boys, seem to eat continuously.

Weight problems are not as prevalent during the early teen years as they are later. However, excess weight may become a problem of teenagers who tend to have poor eating habits.

The years from 12 to 15 are healthy years. In fact, the period from 12 to 18 is the healthiest period throughout life. Accidents are the greatest cause of injury and death.

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MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

When children reach junior high, there is a change in the way school works. Students go from one class and teacher to another for each subject. Some children enjoy this variety, though others tend to feel lost. Children 12 through 14 continue to build larger vocabularies and develop in creative thinking and logical and abstract thought. Those who were good students in elementary school should continue to be good students in junior high. Sometimes, there are great changes, and a poor student suddenly likes schoolwork and does well, but more often, those who were having trouble continue to have trouble. Throughout these years, school is a place for socializing, and studying is secondary for many. Twelve-year-olds usually love school or hate it; there is no in-between. It's a restless age, full of daydreaming and just doing nothing with friends. At age 12, school is a place for friendships but not for study.

By 13, boys and girls begin to like school a little more. They may like to read their favorite book over and over again. Those 13-year-olds who like school are now more settled and used to the routine of changing classes. They may be interested in special projects and activities. If school has been difficult, it will probably continue to be hard, but some settle down and become adequate students.

By 14, teenagers usually become more interested in subjects taught in school, like politics, current events, and biology. Others like public speaking and dramatics. They have more respect for teachers and try harder with their homework and classes that interest them. Boys have more interest in sports, girls in school-sponsored activities.

12–14

Most 12- to 14-year-olds change as dramatically in mental growth as in physical growth. Small children learn through their senses and motor actions and are able to think only in the immediate present. Older children gradually learn to think and reason and to understand the concept of the future as well as the present.

Adolescents are able to think at a much more abstract level, to think logically, and to consider alternate solutions to problems and consequences. They can hold an idea in mind, consider and imagine future outcomes, and consciously select what he or she does. Adolescents also become aware of the thoughts of others. They begin to think about and often worry over what others may think. "What does he think about me?" and "What does she think I think about her?" are common concerns of teenagers.

Thinking about the thoughts of others creates an imaginary audience which may be approving, ("I feel like he thinks I'm a good sport") but more often disapproving ("I feel like she thinks I think she's a snob"). Teenagers often confuse their own thoughts with the thoughts of others, assuming others think and want the same things. Adolescents are also able to think about the problems and needs of others. During these years and through later adolescence, teenagers develop ideas of how society or the world should be, and they often become interested in social problems and causes. Guiding teenagers into worthwhile causes such as volunteer work or school activities is important. Without guidance, many join less desirable activist groups.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There are many normal problems and concerns during early adolescence.

- Growth spurts or lack of growth cause awkwardness and embarrassment.
- Teenagers are often unhappy over their size, looks, hair, skin, clothing, everything.
- Moods change, going from extremes of happiness one day or hour to sadness and depression the next.
- There are sharp contrasts in outlook and actions: being generous one minute and selfish the next; liking friends intensely or disliking them intensely.

This is a time when youngsters have a low self-concept. They begin to think better of themselves as they approach 15. It is often a time of conflicts with adults, which happen over any topic at any time: choice of friends, eating dinner with the family, being home on time, watching television, money, school work--the list goes on and on. A common problem is lack of communication. Teenagers want parents to be interested in them, but at the same time they resent too much discipline or control. For teenagers, their friends are the most important people in their lives. They would rather be with friends than family, and it is often their classmates who set the examples and values they follow. However, the examples and values set by parents and other adults are often a greater influence than adults realize. Adults are most influential when they approach the teenager through listening and indirect guidance. Ordering or commanding no longer works.

12 – 15

During these years, teenagers spend much of their time comparing themselves with each other. Feelings of inferiority, shyness, and self-consciousness are common. So are fears, worries, and anxieties.

Belonging and conforming to the group is very important. Youths want to have the same clothes, use the same language, and display the same mannerisms as everyone else in their group.

Self-centeredness and self-concern are common. Teenagers may worry so much about belonging to the "right" group that they thoughtlessly and even cruelly leave out those they don't think should belong.

There is probably no "average" child, but most go through at least some of the following phases in more or less the same order during these years:

Twelve-year-olds are at the turning point. They are usually quite outgoing and enthusiastic, with a sense of humor. They are a mixture of little kids and almost grown up, acting either childish or mature. They get along well with both adults and children. They usually start being more critical of their parents and begin spending less time in family activities. Friends are important to 12-year-olds. Boys usually have a couple of close friends with whom they play ball or other group sports. Girls like large groups so they can talk and giggle and talk some more. Much of this talk is about boys, and usually it is only talk.

13-YEAR-OLDS

Thirteen-year-olds are more the typical teenager. Touchy, sensitive, they're likely to sulk and pout and go off by themselves. They spend a lot of time thinking about themselves. This can be an unhappy year. Many youngsters have trouble communicating with their parents and sometimes even with their friends. In fact, they have fewer friends in this period, with girls getting together in small groups to confide or tell secrets or gossip. They're more interested in boys, but the boys are usually much more interested in sports than in girls.

14-YEAR-OLDS

Fourteen-year-olds are getting a little more mature and self-confident and are becoming more outgoing again. Less sensitive than 13-year-olds, they are more open with their feelings and occasionally flare up, especially at their parents. In general, though, they get along better with parents and other adults. They usually like themselves better than they did a year ago, though they see things they want to change and improve. Friendships are extremely important. Girls get together mainly in groups. Those who are left out are lonely and try very hard to become part of a group. Boys have groups of friends who get together for ball games and other activities. They tend to be more accepting of non-group members than are girls. Most boys are still not too interested in girls, but some begin dating at this age. Socializing is a major activity for both sexes. Slumber parties and watching boys are favorite things for girls to do. They also talk on the telephone and go on and on, seemingly about nothing.

II WHAT TEENAGERS NEED FROM ADULTS

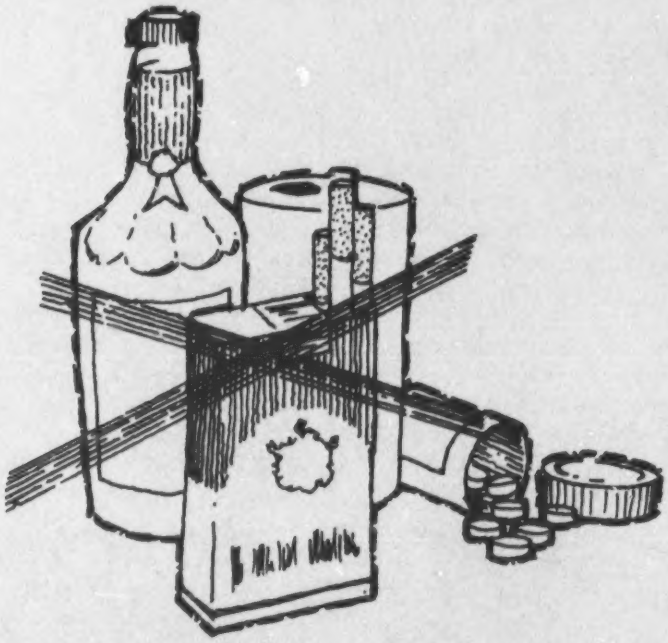
The years from 12 through 15 can be very confusing for teenagers and for adult caregivers or foster parents. It is a time of many physical, mental, and social/emotional changes--all happening at once. There are, however, a number of things adults can do to make the transition easier from childhood to adulthood.

PHYSICAL GROWTH

Regular medical and dental care are always important. Young teenagers are not ready for this responsibility. See that they get yearly checkups and that their immunizations, or shots, are kept up-to-date. Keep a record of shots for all children. Schools often want these. In an emergency it is important to know which immunizations children have or have not had.

Growing teenagers need rest for healthy growth. Eight hours of sleep a night is important for adolescents, just as it is for younger children.

Smoking, drinking, and drugs are not healthy at any age. The best way to keep children from these habits is for the adult to set the example by not using them, but this is hard for many to do. Most young teenagers have trouble understanding that drugs and smoking can hurt their health several years later. Try to be positive. Help them learn that they will look, feel better, have more energy, and save money if they don't get into these habits. Personal conversations and the educational programs of schools, churches, youth organization (such as scouting) can help. Too much lecturing can be almost as bad as none at all. Children may rebel and drink or smoke just to show they can.



NUTRITION

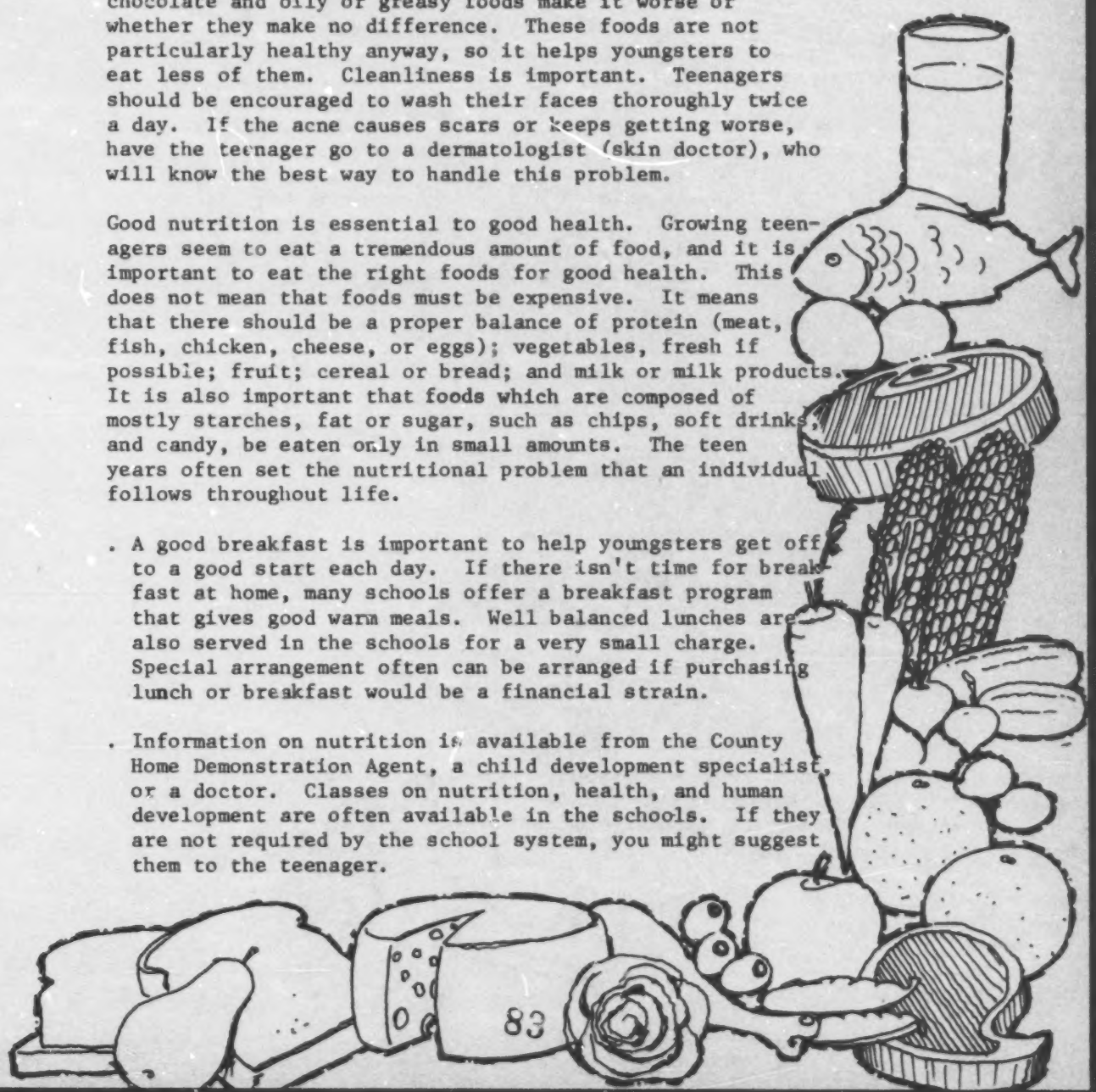
Children who have not learned about the body changes that take place during adolescence need them explained calmly and with reassurance. A doctor or social worker can explain sexual development to the teenager if it would be too difficult for the adult to do. The number of pregnancies among young teenagers keeps increasing. Teenagers must learn about sex before they get into trouble. The Planned Parenthood Center, listed in the telephone book, can also help the teenager, parents, and caregiver.

Acne, or pimples, go away, sometimes in a few months and sometimes in several years. Doctors disagree on whether chocolate and oily or greasy foods make it worse or whether they make no difference. These foods are not particularly healthy anyway, so it helps youngsters to eat less of them. Cleanliness is important. Teenagers should be encouraged to wash their faces thoroughly twice a day. If the acne causes scars or keeps getting worse, have the teenager go to a dermatologist (skin doctor), who will know the best way to handle this problem.

Good nutrition is essential to good health. Growing teenagers seem to eat a tremendous amount of food, and it is important to eat the right foods for good health. This does not mean that foods must be expensive. It means that there should be a proper balance of protein (meat, fish, chicken, cheese, or eggs); vegetables, fresh if possible; fruit; cereal or bread; and milk or milk products. It is also important that foods which are composed of mostly starches, fat or sugar, such as chips, soft drinks, and candy, be eaten only in small amounts. The teen years often set the nutritional problem that an individual follows throughout life.

- A good breakfast is important to help youngsters get off to a good start each day. If there isn't time for breakfast at home, many schools offer a breakfast program that gives good warm meals. Well balanced lunches are also served in the schools for a very small charge. Special arrangement often can be arranged if purchasing lunch or breakfast would be a financial strain.

- Information on nutrition is available from the County Home Demonstration Agent, a child development specialist, or a doctor. Classes on nutrition, health, and human development are often available in the schools. If they are not required by the school system, you might suggest them to the teenager.



ACCIDENTS

While some accidents probably cannot be prevented, there are precautions that can be taken to prevent others.

- Make sure children learn how to swim. The Red Cross usually offers summer swimming courses; winter instruction is sometimes available through the YMCA, the recreation department, or community center. Water safety should also be learned: always swim with a friend; always swim in a supervised area or a swimming pool; wear a life jacket or belt for boating and skiing, etc.

- Bike accidents can be avoided by seeing that children's bicycles are properly equipped with reflectors and lights for night riding. Encourage children to keep their bikes, especially the brakes and tires, in good repair.

- Encourage youngsters to stop their activity when they are tired. More accidents occur late in the day when it is beginning to get dark and when children are tired. (The same thing is true of adult accidents.)

By 14 or 15, many teenagers have friends who are old enough to drive. Although you may not have any influence over the older teenage driver, you can help the younger teenager be selective in riding with others. Calmly, without lecturing or sermonizing, explain the dangers of driving recklessly, playing games such as "spin-off" in cars, or drinking while driving. Make arrangements with your teenager to call you and for you to come after them should they find that they are riding with someone whose driving is dangerous. Teen girls should always carry "telephone change" which is not spent for other purposes.

SCHOOL WORK

Putting pressure on youngsters to do better in school rarely helps. All children are not going to be "A" students. Let them know that the important thing is for them to do their best.

At the junior high level, students have more choices than they did in elementary school. If they like music or art, they might join the band or choir or take a special art class. Success in these things will make the rest of school look better. Shop classses and homemaking provide other alternatives to standard classes. Talk to the counselor or suggest that the teenager talk to the counselor to learn what other classes are available.

Sports or extracurricular activities may lead to greater interest in school. Children may keep their grades up if it means being on the basketball team, in student government, or in the pep squad.

Although teenagers are not as eager as younger children for adults to talk with teachers, this is still important. Often teachers in the junior high schools begin to feel that parents or other adults no longer care about the student. Just a friendly visit with the teacher often helps the teacher take a greater interest in the student.

Adults can help teenagers by encouraging them to set aside a specific hour each evening for studying. Often it is necessary to turn off the television set and set a time limit on telephone calls to get the teenager to study. This is, however, a part of the adult's responsibility in teaching good study habits to the teenager.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL GROWTH

Communication is the key to getting along with young teenagers. Adults should be willing to listen to them, to hear their views and opinions even if they don't agree with their opinions. Try to discuss things without getting too emotional. Most real problems happen when adults and children can't talk to one another. There are several things that might help.

Take teenagers' feeling and worries seriously. Don't criticize or laugh just because these things seem silly or unimportant. Try to be understanding and give constructive suggestions rather than direct orders. A friendly attitude is important in gaining a teenager's trust and confidence. Adults should continue to take responsibility for guiding young people. Just because they think or say they are grown up is no reason to give up your responsibility. Setting reasonable limits and offering guidance helps assure teenagers that someone really does care about them. Allow arguments or heated discussions that challenge what an adult might say. Listen to what youngsters have to say. It isn't necessary to agree with them, but the fact that their judgement is being shown some respect will help keep the lines of communication open.

Try to give children a feeling of hope and a desire. If they live in an environment with a positive view of life, they are more likely to develop such a view themselves. Encourage them to do well in school, and this will lead to better jobs and a happier life.

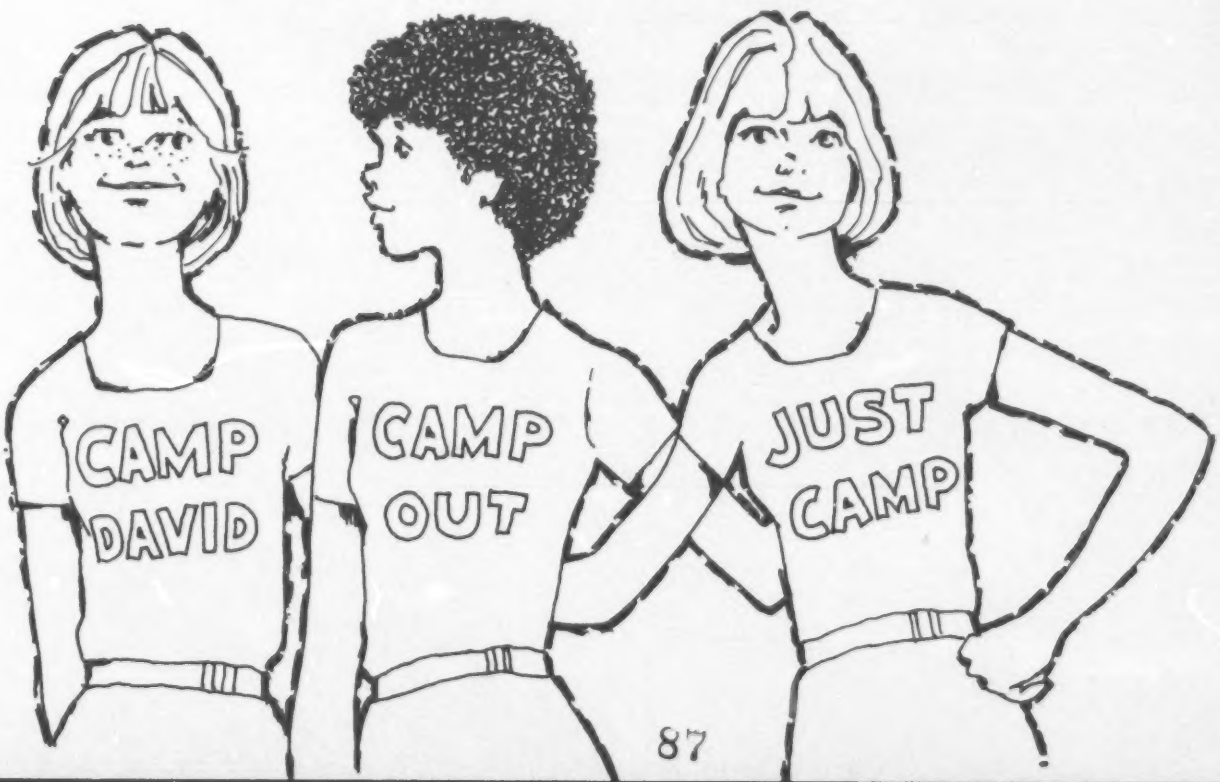
FRIENDS

Some things that don't mean much to an adult may be extremely important to a youngster. There is usually some conflict between generations, but some of it can be eliminated with a little understanding. Remember these things:

. Friends are of major importance. Children without friends need special understanding and acceptance and help to find the cause of their problem and learn what to do about it.

. Teenagers are very concerned about their appearance. Girls want to be considered pretty or cute and boys want to be thought of as good looking. Both dress according to the groups they want to be identified with. Hair, skin, clothing, figure are important. Eventually they will be more secure and self-confident, and they will move on to other intersts. Meanwhile, this is a normal part of growing up.

. Any difference, whether it's wearing something out of style or having a physical defect, can make a teenager feel inferior. Even if the difference seems attractive to an adult, it won't be to teenagers. This is typical. Eventually they will outgrow the strong need to be like everyone else.



III IDENTIFYING AND HANDLING PROBLEMS

With so many differnt kinds of changes happening to 12- to 15-year-olds, adult caregivers may wonder just how to tell what is or isn't normal. Just as certain growing patterns can be expected, certain growing problems can be anticipated. There are warning signals the alert adults should watch for in physical, mental, and social/emotional in their moods.

As stated earlier, teenagers change rapidly and suddenly in their moods and interests as well as in physical development. However, sudden and drastic changes may indicate a deeper problem and the need for outside help.

SUDDEN CHANGE

Good students who suddenly become poor ones may need help. They may be depressed about something, or discouraged because they are trying and not making it. The important thing is to find the cause so something can be done about it.

Children who suddenly go from being a good student to being a poor one may need a medical checkup. Vision can change suddenly, causing eye strain and other problems, while vitamin deficiencies or the beginning of an illness can cause a child to stop working and lose interest.

If vision, hearing, or other problems are suspected, schools and community agencies often have testing programs that can be used to determine if such a problem exists. A family doctor also can check for possible problems.

Sudden changes can be caused by upsetting home situations and problems with family or friends. Suggest that the child talk the situation over with the school counselor or social worker if he or she doesn't want to talk to you. Sometimes it's easier to talk to an outsider than a family member.

Poor nutrition is a major problem among teenagers and adults alike. Young teenagers usually eat too many sweets and snacks that are not healthy, and many have a tendency to skip breakfast. "Empty" calories are bad for the teeth, because they cause cavities. They are of no use for developing. They can also lead to overweight, and it's related health, emotional, and social problem. Children who are always tired or hungry could be showing symptoms of a physical condition that needs correction.

PHYSICAL DIFFERENCES

Individual differences in the rate of physical development bothers many teenagers. Adolescents who look different from their classmates tend to feel different. They need to learn and understand about the changes happening to their bodies. Slow maturing and late maturing youngsters often need special help. First, early maturing girls generally feel conspicuous and out of step. They look older than their friends, any many people expect them to act older, even though they are not yet ready or able to do that. Late maturing boys who have not started growing and whose voices are still changing are often teased or ignored by girls. Boys may not pay much attention to them either, because they are not strong enough or large enough to compete in sports and other athletic activities.

The opposite extremes bring fewer problems. Early maturing boys are often looked up to, especially by the girls. Late maturing girls are often considered "cute" and aren't usually bothered by it. Being a small girl can even be a social advantage when most boys have not yet had their growth spurt.

Reassure early developers that physical growth and change is normal and that everyone goes through it on the way to growing up. Help them understand that there is nothing wrong with them because they are more grown up, at least physically, than some of their friends. Late developers need an equal amount of reassurance. Help them understand that some children develop more slowly than others, just like some babies have lots of hair and some don't but in time they all grow hair.

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

Changing moods, feelings of being left out, fear of falling to pieces, and panic all are considered normal in the young teenager, yet they would look strange in an adult. It is difficult for adults to separate the normal from the abnormal and to decide when a child needs professional help. Following are some of the times when extra guidance seems necessary:

Depressed, alienated youngsters who distrust adults and age-mates and have trouble controlling their impulses. They go against socially accepted rules of conduct and feel set apart from other people. They may even cause themselves to become sick when there is no physical reason. Children who have one or more of these symptoms over a period of time need a special kind of help the adult caregiver may not be able to give them. The social worker, school psychologist, or local Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center should be able to give help needed.

ECONOMICAL

Economically deprived youths often get little support or encouragement at home from adults who mean something to them, along with no support from their classmates. Some have to put up with moving from school to school, never completing a full year in any one of them.

Teenagers with emotional problems usually have school problems as well. You can always try to help children who have school problems become more interested in learning. Understanding and acceptance are essential. Children need to feel loved and wanted whether or not they are doing well academically. When problems are related to school, the teacher and counselor should be consulted.

Get professional help if youngsters continue to have serious problems at school or are picked up for delinquent behavior. Sometimes an outsider--a social worker, school counselor, or counselor from Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center--can help both you and the teenager through a bad time.

HANDICAPPED TEENAGERS

Handicapped teenagers need special help during these years. They need extra understanding at home and may need special counseling. These children have the usual teenage problems in addition to their special physical problems to deal with. When other children are beginning to make new friendships and independence, the handicapped child is held back by a lack of mobility or other differences from their peers. Independence that is so important for a teenager may be impossible for them. Many may always need someone to take care of their physical needs.

Children with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, rheumatic fever, or epilepsy also suffer. They usually don't look different from others their age, but they may have to limit their activities or follow a special diet. Their classmates may call them fakers (because their disability doesn't show) or weirdos. Because of their many real problems, some disabled children accept their role of being different and not one of the crowd. Others become fearful or hostile or begin feeling sorry for themselves. Any of these reactions handicap them even more. The children are shutting themselves off from their own age group. This can prevent healthy mental and social development.

Give handicapped and chronically ill children the extra support they need. Help them become as independent as they can. Include them in as many activities with family and friends as possible. This may mean more work for the parent or caregiver, but in the long run it will mean less as the youngster learns to be as self-sufficient as possible.

Children with mild retardation have special classes in many junior and senior high schools. They can remain at the usual grade level, but class work is matched to their level of development.

Give special reassurance and guidance to children who are not accepted by their classmates because of size or because they are behind in school. Let them know that you will always love and accept them, and help them get through this difficult time in their lives.

DRUGS

The use of drugs and alcohol occurs with increasing frequency in the early adolescent years. Some youngsters think smoking and drinking are signs of being grown up. Some try drugs and drinking to see what it is like. Others use them because their friends do, and they want to be one of the crowd. Still others want to escape reality and their daily world, or think drugs or alcohol will give them reassurance and self-confidence and a feeling of strength. Some drugs are addictive, or habitforming, while others are not physically addictive but people become dependent on them psychologically, or mentally. Whatever the reasons for taking them, they are not good for health and can, in fact, have very bad effects on it. Cigarette smoking has been proven to be bad for health. It is in the early and midteen years that people who are going to be smokers generally begin this habit. Information and free pamphlets on drug problems is available from the Texas Department of Health. Check with your local public health department for free materials.

SUMMARY

During the years from 12 to 15 many changes occur. It is a difficult time, as children move into adulthood physically while, in many respects, still remain children emotionally. The junior high school years require skills in academics, especially reading, and the ability to make new friends in a larger school. The youngster who enters the teen years with feelings of self-confidence and competence will have an easier time. Adults can help by being sensitive to the teenager's changing needs and concerns and by providing guidance and support while encouraging independence.

Teenagers must know that they can count on a caring adult. It is important to be able to talk together, to understand and to be understood. Teenagers need to be able to express their thoughts and feelings, both positive and negative. They also need to know that, although you may not always agree with what they say or do, you respect their thoughts and feelings and are willing to work through problem situations with them. Agreement is not as important as caring and understanding.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Take this test both before and after studying this module to see what you have learned. An answer key is on the next page.

Read each question and circle all the correct answers.

1. The area of development most likely to cause problems for children aged 12-15 is:

   A. Emotional Changes
   B. Physical Changes
   C. Mental Changes
   D. Social Changes

2. True False The period from 12 to 18 is the healthiest period throughout life.

3. True False A major change in mental growth is that the 12 to 14-year-old becomes capable of think about what others think.

4. True False For all the problems that 13-year-olds have, they seem to have more friends than ever.

5. True False At this age, boys tend to be more accepting of non-group members than girls.

6. True False Doctors have determined that chocolate and oily or greasy foods make acne (pimples) worse.

7. True False Information and free pamphlets on drug problems is available from the Texas Department of Health.

8. True False This is an age when self-concept is particularly high.

9. True False Young teenagers are usually mature enough to see to their own regular medical and dental care.

10. True False It is not as important to keep immunization records for children of this age group as it once was.

11. True False Individuality takes on increasing importance during the ages 12 to 15.

ANSWER KEY

1. A
2. True
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. True
8. False
9. False
10. False
11. False

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